



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JON RICHARDS

WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY

Assembly Bill 836
Testimony for the Assembly Housing Committee
March 24, 2010

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Housing Committee, for allowing me to testify before you today about AB 836. Most renters and home buyers are familiar with the risks associated with lead paint, asbestos, and mold. However, most do not think to inquire about whether methamphetamine has ever been manufactured on the property.

This bill would require sellers of residential property to include on the real estate condition report whether methamphetamine has been manufactured on the property if that is known to the seller at the time of the sale. Additionally, AB 836 would require landlords to disclose, in writing, if meth has been manufactured in the rental unit to prospective tenants. This is a common sense approach to protecting home buyers and renters from the harmful residues left over from the production of methamphetamine.

The products used in the production of Methamphetamine are very hazardous. Propane and acetone are a few of the many dangerous chemicals used to produce meth. The residue created during the production seeps into the carpets and walls. These chemicals linger in the home long after the lab has been removed. This poses a significant risk to any subsequent renters or owners, especially if the new renters or owners have small children.

WTMJ-TV in Milwaukee recently aired a story about a young family that rented a home from a landlord that knew of the past presence of meth on the premises, yet said nothing to the renters because he was not obligated to do so. Even more disturbing, the family's young daughter used the room where the methamphetamine had been cooked as her bedroom.

This law would bring Wisconsin law in line with other states such as Missouri and California which both have enacted laws requiring landlords and sellers to disclose whether meth has been produced on the property.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to answer any questions that you or the members of the committee might have.





Wisconsin Builders Association

March 24, 2010

TO: Members of the Assembly Housing Committee
Representative Jon Richards

FROM: Brad Boycks
Wisconsin Builders Association ®
Director of Government and Political Affairs

RE: Questions and concerns regarding 2009 Assembly Bill 836 (AB 836), relating to requiring sellers of residential real property and landlords of residential rental property to disclose that methamphetamine has been manufactured on the property

Today the Assembly Committee on Housing will be hearing testimony regarding AB 843 relating to requiring sellers of residential real property and landlords of residential rental property to disclose that methamphetamine has been manufactured on the property.

The Wisconsin Builders Association® has some questions and comments on AB 843 that we would like to share with the committee and bill author today:

- Having this requirement in perpetuity in both multifamily units and single family homes seems excessive.
- Would it be possible to establish a set amount of time that these requirements would be necessary for the owner of a multifamily unit or single family home to disclose?
- Are their cleaning methods to remediate the products left behind during the production of methamphetamines? If so, could a process be set up that if the property is cleaned they would no longer need to comply with these disclosure requirements?
- Is the replacement of carpet in a structure, painting of the walls and thorough cleaning enough to remediate the building and take away any risk to the next resident?

Thank you for your consideration to the enclosed concerns and questions regarding AB 836. We look forward to hearing from the author and committee on the above questions and concerns.

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Testimony Before the Committee on Housing
Assembly Bill 836
By Margaret Bowitz,
Director of Case Management and Training Services
Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council
March 24, 2010

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee on Housing regarding Assembly Bill 836.

My name is Margaret Bowitz and I am the Director of Case Management and Training Services for the Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council. The Council is a private nonprofit organization founded in 1977.

We provide fair housing services throughout the State of Wisconsin. Our goal is to guarantee all people equal access to housing opportunities.

The Fair Housing Council supports a change in state statutes that would require landlords to disclose to prospective tenants that methamphetamine has been manufactured on the premises. We support this change because fair housing choice occurs when housing consumers have access to the greatest amount of information possible, and have the tools to make informed, educated choices.

Further, the Council supports Assembly Bill 836 because it may have an important benefit to two classes in particular protected by the Wisconsin Open Housing Law: people with disabilities and families with children. Living in a home where methamphetamine was produced may have a disparate negative impact on the health of people with disabilities and children, insofar as they may have increased sensitivities to the toxic chemicals resulting from methamphetamine production. According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, the manufacture of a pound of methamphetamine results in five or more pounds of toxic chemicals that seep into walls, floors and other surfaces, creating serious health risks. For children, whose nervous systems are still in development, and for people with disabilities, who may have preexisting compromised health, respiratory and immune systems, the risks could be enormous. The Fair Housing Council supports this bill and the Committee's efforts to protect the fair housing rights of our most vulnerable populations, by requiring landlords to give them information that could enable them to protect themselves.

Thank you.